



Antonín Dvořák JAKOBÍN (The Jacobin)

Pivovarov, Werba, Grato, Monogarova, Palazzi
Lehotsky, Elliot, Panova, Sharp

Wexford Festival Opera Chorus

National Philharmonic Orchestra of Belarus
Alexandre Voloschuk

Valentin Pivovarov (Count Vilém of Harasov)



WEXFORD FESTIVAL OPERA

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Wexford Festival Opera

Luigi Ferrari, Artistic Director Jerome Hynes, Chief Executive

Antonín Dvořák (1841 - 1904)

Jakobín

Opera in three acts to a libretto by Marie Červinková-Riegrová

First performance: National Theatre, Prague February 12, 1889

Wexford Festival Opera 2001 performances: October 19, 22, 25, 28, 31 November 3

By arrangement with Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Limited

Sung in Czech

<i>Count Vilém of Harasov</i>	Valentin Pivovarov
<i>Bohuš</i>	Markus Werba
<i>Adolf</i>	Alessandro Grato
<i>Julie</i>	Tatiana Monogarova
<i>Filip</i>	Mirco Palazzi
<i>Jiří</i>	Michal Lehotsky
<i>Benda</i>	Alasdair Elliot
<i>Terinka</i>	Mariana Panova
<i>Lotinka</i>	Rebecca Sharp

Wexford Festival Opera Chorus

The Young Wexford Singers

National Philharmonic Orchestra of Belarus

Alexander Voloschuk *conductor*

Lubomir Mátl *chorus master*

Jakobín

Synopsis	p. 6
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Music Index	
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Compact disc 1	p. 9
----------------	------

Compact disc 2	p. 11
----------------	-------

Unlocking the song	p. 13
--------------------	-------

<i>Jan Smaczny</i>	
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ACT I

Estranged from his son Bohuš, Count Vilém has fixed his affections on his nephew, Adolf, instead. Bohuš, absent and living in Paris, is deemed a 'Jacobin' by his father. After many year's absence and concealing their identity Bohuš brings his wife Julie back to the family château.

The Count now shuns the family home, saddened by the death of his wife and angered by the departure of his son. They arrive in the village and watch the schoolmaster Benda with his daughter Terinka coming out of the church. With them is Terinka's suitor, the elderly and authoritarian Burgrave, and Jiří, the young forester who is really Terinka's preferred sweetheart. In conversation Bohuš and Julie learn all about the count's supposedly 'reckless son'. Declaring their own support for freedom they are regarded with suspicion by the Burgrave. To everyone's surprise the Count is announced. He appears accompanied by Adolf. Bohuš and Julie remain in the background and listen as the Count announces Adolf as his heir.

ACT II

In the schoolhouse, Benda rehearses the chorus, children, Terinka and Jiří for a festive cantata. The rehearsal done, Benda leaves for the chateau shooping Jiří out as he goes. Jiří sneaks back and he and Terinka sing of their love for each other. On Benda's return Bohuš and Julie appear seeking shelter and Benda agrees to conceal them. The Burgrave arrives to woo Terinka and threatens Jiří, his rival, with enlistment in the army. Adolf appears and promises the Burgrave that he will promote him to the rank of court official provided he captures the Jacobins rumoured to be in the village. Bohuš comes out of hiding, intending to frustrate Adolf's plan, only to find himself marched off to jail by the Burgrave's troops. Bohuš demands to be taken before the Count while Jiří too is escorted to jail.

ACT III

The schoolmaster and Julie steal into the chateau. The Count resists Benda's pleas on behalf of his son and Julie is the only hope left. She sings a song that the late Countess used to sing to her son and, moved by the sound of the lullaby, the Count listens to her. She defends Bohuš, pointing out that the rift between the Count and his son is the result of Adolf's plotting. The Count frees the prisoners, makes his peace with Bohuš and Julie and bestows his blessing on Terinka and Jiří as well.

Tatjana Monogarova (Julie), Markus Werba (Bohuš)



Compact disc 1

1.13.46

1	Introduction	01.00
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ACT I

2	Scene 1. Bohuš, Julie, Chorus	08.36
3	Scene 2. Chorus	02.30
4	Scene 3. Benda, Terinka, Jiří, Purkrabí (off stage)	05.30
5	Scene 4. Jiří, Chorus	01.37
6	Scene 5. Add Terinka, Purkrabí	04.46
7	Scene 6. Purkrabí	02.32
8	Scene 7. Terinka, Jiří, Purkrabí	07.09
9	Scene 8. Add Bohuš, Julie	04.34
10	Scene 9. Add Chorus and Benda	01.18
11	Scene 10. Add Count Vilém, Adolf	03.47

ACT II

12	Introduction	03.00
13	Scene 1. Benda, Jiří, Terinka, Chorus	10.02
14	Scene 2. Terinka, Jiří	10.01
15	Scene 3. Add Benda	03.40

Markus Werba (Bohuš), Alessandro Grato (Adolf)



Music Index		11
16	Scene 4. Add Chorus	00.34
17	Scene 5. Add Bohuš, Julie	02.57

Compact disc 2	1.14.50
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ACT II

1	Scene 5. Add Bohuš, Julie	07.07
2	Scene 6. Purkrabí, Benda, Jiří, Terinka	06.49
3	Scene 7. Add Adolf, Bohuš	03.17
4	Scene 8. Add Julie, Chorus	10.53

ACT III

5	Scene 1. Jiří, Adolf, Purkrabí, Lotinka, Chorus	04.53
6	Scene 2. Julie, Benda, Lotinka	02.41
7	Scene 3. Count Vilém, Benda	09.25
8	Scene 4. Benda, Julie	02.36
9	Scene 5. Count Vilém, Julie	05.21
10	Scene 6. Add Children Chorus (off stage)	05.40
11	Scene 7. Count Vilém, Adolf, Purkrabí, Benda, Children Chorus and Chorus	07.05
12	Scene 8. Add Julie, Bohuš, Jiří, Terinka	08.54

Markus Werba (Bohuš), Tatiana Monogarova (Julie), Michal Lehotsky (Jiří)



Unlocking the song

Dvořák and Opera

On 1 March 1904, exactly two months before he died, Dvořák stated in an interview to the Viennese newspaper, *Die Reichswehr*, that: ‘...my main inclination is toward dramatic composition’. As further evidence of this artistic aspiration, Dvořák added that he had been turning down requests for chamber music from his German publisher Simrock, and that he had demonstrated years before that his main interest was opera rather than symphonic composition. For modern audiences, familiar with Dvořák as the composer of hugely successful symphonies, concertos and chamber music, his statement might seem the product of aged eccentricity, but it was not the maverick boast of a composer secure in his reputation wanting to surprise the musical public. Dvořák gave his interview only slightly more than three weeks before the premiere of his eleventh opera, *Armida*.

Dvořák’s engagement with opera stretched back well over forty years. As a penniless young musician, just graduated from the Prague Organ School, he had taken work as a viola player in the orchestra of the newly-founded Prague Provisional Theatre. This small, but highly significant, institution opened its doors on 18 November 1862, the first theatre in Prague given over exclusively to the performance of plays and opera in Czech. The founding of such a theatre was one of the most important events in the modern Czech cultural revival. Throughout the nineteenth century, Prague had been changing from a city in which the majority language was German to Czech. This was largely due to the effects of industrial prosperity attracting large numbers of country folk, most of whom were Czech speakers, to the capital.

In many ways, Dvořák's own career was typical of this tendency. Coming from a poor rural background, he had gone to Prague for education and betterment; in his early years he stayed with members of his extended family who had also followed this urban drift in search of prosperity. Success, however, was slow in coming, and the 1860s was a time of grinding poverty for the young composer as he eked out a living playing in the orchestra and teaching. But they were also remarkably stimulating. The mid 1860s were in many ways the glory years for opera in the Czech national revival with 1866 perhaps the most remarkable year with the premieres of Smetana's first two operas, *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia* and *The Bartered Bride*, in both of which Dvořák played.

By the end of the 1860s, when Dvořák was himself turning his hand to writing opera, a repertoire of new Czech operas was bedding down nicely. This was far from the situation earlier in the decade. In fact, the Provisional Theatre had opened not with a Czech opera, but with Cherubini's *The Water Carrier*. The embarrassing fact for the theatre management was that there were no Czech operas of sufficient weight to provide a backbone for the new theatre's repertoire. The 'first' Czech opera, František Skroup's, *The Tinker*, though held in honour and affection was hardly substantial enough to initiate a tradition. Thus, a competition was inaugurated in 1861, by Count Jan Harrach, to encourage Czech composers and librettists to supply works for the theatre. Serious operas were to be based on Czech history, and comedies on the life of the Czech peoples of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. After delays and some murky politics, Smetana's *The Brandenburgers in Bohemia* was declared the winner. The popularity of this opera far outweighed that of *The Bartered Bride* premiered some months later; it was only after some four years and several revisions that Smetana's first comedy seemed secure as the locus classicus of Czech light opera.

Dvořák saw all these developments from the pit of the Provisional Theatre. Apart from the burgeoning Czech repertoire he was becoming familiar with a broad range of opera from many traditions. Verdi, Meyerbeer, Gounod and, of

course, Mozart were popular among the Czechs; there was also a marked liking for operetta, in particular Offenbach. The one composer who did not feature in the repertoire was Wagner. This was, in part, an ideological decision on the part of Smetana who took over as musical director of the theatre in 1866, but there were also practical considerations: both orchestra and chorus were very small; there were, for example only two desks of first and second violins, and Dvořák frequently found himself on his own on the viola line. Wagner, however, was still of significance for Czech composers. For all his doubts about the suitability of Wagner for the Czech stage, Smetana was a profound admirer of his music. Dvořák, for his part, was compulsively drawn to Wagner throughout the 1860s and on 8 February 1863 played in a concert of his music conducted by the maestro himself.

Unsurprisingly, Wagner proved a major influence on Dvořák's first two operas: the romantic opera, *Alfred*, and the comedy *The King and the Charcoal-burner*. *Alfred*, based on the struggles of the British worthy, was written to an early nineteenth-century libretto by Karl Theodor Körner and was in German; Dvořák may well have had thoughts of having it translated into Czech since more than one of the operas by Czech composers given in the Provisional Theatre had started life in German. Although Dvořák seems to have shown the score to Smetana, *Alfred* remained one of the composer's darker secrets and its existence was virtually unknown at the time of his death. *The King and the Charcoal-burner*, however, went into production at theatre. It proved something of a baptism of fire for the young Dvořák; the dazzlingly original score proved far too difficult for the singers and after a few weeks of rehearsal, the opera was withdrawn. Though profoundly discouraging, this episode was a useful lesson. Dvořák went back to the libretto and rewrote the work completely in a much lighter, more conventional style.

The new score reached the stage on 24 November 1874 to considerable public acclaim. A scene involving a chorus of charcoal-burners with the accompaniment of a bagpiper (imitated in the orchestra) was much praised in

the newspaper *Národní listy* as being from: '... the pen of someone who knows truly how to paint the happiest pages from the life of the people'. The modest success of *The King and the Charcoal-burner* marked the start of Dvořák's fruitful relationship with the Provisional Theatre company.

He already had on the stocks a single-act comic opera, *The Stubborn Lovers*, but this had to wait until 1882 for its premiere. His next work to be staged was the five-act grand opera, *Vanda*. Based on a story from Polish historical mythology, it was a big-boned piece, the more spectacular portions of which once again defeated the decidedly modest stage of the Provisional Theatre. Owing to political squabbles with which Dvořák had nothing to do, the premiere of *Vanda* on 17 April 1876 was not widely reviewed and the opera has acquired the quite unjustified reputation in literature on the composer of being a failure; this rather depressing judgement is far from reality as represented by the score. The writer, Otakar Hostinsky, not always a favourable critic of Dvořák, lamented eloquently the absence of *Vanda* from the cycle of the composer's operas held in the National Theatre in 1901: '*Vanda* involves such interesting and impressive features ...that it is deplorable that it was missing from the repertoire during the commemorative cycle of Dvořák's operas... 'Deplorable indeed: the score has an epic sweep and much of the music is ravishingly lyrical; the set pieces are magnificently sustained and all of the finales are effective.

Dvořák's next two operas written for the Provisional Theatre, the comedy, *The Cunning Peasant*, and the grand opera, *Dimitrij*, were much more successful. Despite its terrible libretto, *The Cunning Peasant* won over audiences with its abundant lyricism and clocked up an impressive twenty performances between its premiere on 27 January 1878 and the opening of the National Theatre five years later. In fact, it was only supplanted in the public's affections by the arrival of *Jakobín* a decade later. *Dimitrij*, to the first wholly satisfactory libretto Dvořák had set is a stirring account of the events that took place in Moscow after the death of Boris Godunov (though not intended as such, it is effectively a sequel to

Mussorgsky's *Boris*).

The remainder of Dvořák's operatic career was largely the story of a string of successes culminating in the triumph of *Rusalka* on 31 March 1901. After his return from America in 1895, Dvořák was keen to devote himself more or less exclusively to opera. He made important revisions to *Dimitrij* and *Jakobín* and wrote the two 'fairy-tale' operas, *The Devil and Kate* (premiered 23 November 1899) and *Rusalka*, which remain his most frequently performed stage works. *Armida*, a four-act grand opera to a decidedly old-fashioned libretto, marked a change in fortunes. Its premiere, on 25 March 1904, though not a comprehensive failure, was the greatest reverse Dvořák had experienced in nearly thirty years. Based on the episode from Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* which tells the story of the love of Armida and Rinaldo, set amid the crusades and replete with fantastic magical effects, the opera was a long way from the Bohemian forest which Dvořák had evoked so exquisitely in *Rusalka* and clearly it puzzled rather than delighted its first audiences. Had Dvořák lived, he almost certainly would have revised the score, but on 1 May 1904, hardly more than a month after *Armida*'s debut, Dvořák unexpectedly died.

Jakobín

Dimitrij not only marked the beginning of Dvořák's full maturity as an opera composer, it was his first collaboration with the librettist Marie Červinková-Riegrová. After the success of *Dimitrij*, Dvořák asked her for a comedy, a project on which he had considered collaborating with Josef Štolba, the much less talented librettist of *The Stubborn Lovers*. Somewhat against her natural inclinations, Červinková-Riegrová sent Dvořák the libretto of *Jakobín* early in 1884. At this stage Dvořák was all warm approval, writing in the following terms: 'Thank you most heartily for kindly sending the libretto ... I'm really

looking forward to [working on] it...'. Červinková-Riegrová might well have heard warning bells in his next phrase, however: '... at the moment I don't know when I'll be able to start'. Further prevarication followed with another note in July 1884: 'Concerning *Jakobín*, I can say to you that I am looking forward to working on it so much so that I can hardly wait'. Dvořák managed to 'hardly wait' for another three years, writing to the increasingly frustrated librettist in the following terms: '... and I would really like to get down to work [on *Jakobín*].' The reason for the delay was related to Dvořák's rapidly expanding career and reputation. Not only did this mean he was busy with commissions from abroad, notably the choral festivals of England, but he was becoming slightly wary of operatic subject-matter that might brand him as a provincial, a tendency undoubtedly prompted by the Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick who was taking a particular interest in Dvořák. Also, just before receiving the libretto of *Jakobín*, the Prague premiere of Bizet's *Carmen* had taken place. Already well known to Dvořák from the score, the opera made a marked impression on him. Matters came to a head at the end of July 1887 when Dvořák wrote to Červinková-Riegrová suggesting: '...perhaps you could think of writing for me something fantastic and romantic, and very original...' The librettist's reply on 1 August was on the dusty side: '...If you don't have an appetite or feeling for *Jakobín*, ...please feel unafraid to return the libretto to me'. This seems to have galvanised the composer who began work three months later on 10 November. A year on he was able to report: '...I hasten to tell you that the second act [of *Jakobín*] up to the final scene is complete'.

Had Červinková-Riegrová not taken such a firm line with Dvořák over her libretto, the world would have been much the poorer. For his part, a certain froideur concerning the libretto was perhaps understandable. In the middle of so much international attention, with tempting offers from a number of European centres, he received perhaps the most obviously Czech libretto he had ever had in his hands. Also, he had seen Czech comic operas come and, for the most part, depart from the repertoire with embarrassing rapidity and did

not wish this attempt to go the same way, hence his request for something, above all, 'original'. Not only did he want an opera that would be a credit to the Czech stage, but one that could hold its own abroad.

Paradoxically, once Dvořák began work - doubtless as the wily librettist had foreseen - he fell in love with the subject and its characters; speaking to a friend about the story, Dvořák enthused: '... there is in it a country teacher - there's a character for you, one you could go mad about!'. Thus, ironically, Dvořák's reason for doubt over the libretto - namely its provincial nature - was the very quality that made the opera one of his greatest and a worthy successor to the classic of Czech comedy, Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*. Although Červinková-Riegrová's libretto was a far more finished piece than Sabina's had been for Smetana, it had many things in common, not least the setting in the Czech countryside and the pungent nature of the characterisation; better still, the story develops with Červinková-Riegrová's customary strong sense of direction and, with the partially frustrated amours of Jiří and Terinka, a well integrated subplot.

Dvořák was completely at home with the surroundings and cast of the opera. Its setting a small country town with a castle in the background was one with which he could easily identify. He had been born in a village dominated by a large local castle and then spent three years in a country town where the major influence on him was a musician schoolmaster who, coincidentally, had a daughter named Terinka. Dvořák's characterisation of some of the figures in *Jakobín* certainly owes much to previous experience: Bohuš's blend of passion and high-mindedness is well founded on noble baritones in earlier operas, notably King Matyáš in *The King and the Charcoal-burner*. The charming pair of lovers, Jiří and Terinka, owe a good deal to three sets of lovers in his earlier comic operas, and yet they come into much clearer focus in Červinková-Riegrová's libretto where comedy teeters so skilfully on the verge of tragedy. The villainous Adolf can't lay claim to much depth of characterisation, but his side-kick, the steward Filip, is a fine comic creation: his first entry, all pastiche trills and hints of *Don*

Giovanni, is hand-rubbingly insincere; indeed, Filip has all the oleaginous awfulness of a Dickensian harasser who inevitably gets his come-uppance. The depiction of the schoolmaster-musician, Benda, is entirely believable. Dvořák captures this character with poetic insight: pedantic and fussy, he is also easily moved and radiates an affecting enthusiasm for his art. He dominates the second act, rehearsing the choir, exposing the illicit love-making of Jiří and Terinka, and warming to Bohuš's sincerity when he sings so movingly of his exile and memory of his homeland.

As a whole, the music of *Jakobín* has a vitality and naturalness which belies the image of Dvořák in the 1880s as largely a 'classical romantic', the writer of the kind of symphonies and chamber music of which Brahms and Hanslick would have approved. For Dvořák the 1880s was also the decade of the superbly dramatic cantata, *The Spectre's Bride*, the second set of Slavonic dances and the free-wheeling and experimental eighth symphony. The musical language of the opera reflects this richness and variety. Dvořák's use of texture has at times an almost Straussian subtlety and repeated listenings reveal many layers of allusion and cunningly insouciant reference. Nor do his lyrical gifts fail, or even come close to the routine: where necessary, as in the duet and ensemble, 'We wandered long abroad' ('My cizinou jsme bloudili'), Dvořák assays a noble dignity which captures the national vein superbly - the chorus of this remarkable number is the exile's lament, 'only in song did we find sweet relief', reminding us that a major theme of the opera is the power of music and its role among the Czechs. Elsewhere, the lyricism pours out, as in the magnificent duet for Jiří and Terinka in the second act, with breathtaking confidence. There is also a moment of fascinatingly original harmony in Julie's singing of an old lullaby in the third act.

None of these are isolated moments of distinction, one marvellous number follows another: from the sheer beauty of the opening chorus, through the coy exchanges between the young men and women of the town after church, to Jiří's wickedly funny lampooning of the revolting Filip - and this is only the first

act. If definitions are required, then *Jakobín* is, unashamedly, a number opera. But the sheer momentum (much aided by a revision to the structure of the opera made in 1897 which tidies up the action in the third act considerably, including moving all of the ballet to the end of the opera) of Dvořák's music carries the listener through the double bars with infectious vitality. The moment, however, which captures the essence of the opera's success is the ensemble, initiated by Bohuš, in the last scene of the third act. Here the prodigal not only celebrates the return of his father's love, but also his joy at coming home; the melodic appeal is wholehearted and direct, and shows Bohuš to be the key figure who throughout the opera has projected its essential spirit. Although Dvořák often went abroad and even had the opportunity of settling away from his native Bohemia, he was never at ease away from home. The beauty and abundant humanity of this climactic ensemble, along with so much else in this, the finest of Dvořák's comic operas, offers an image of what perhaps he thought best about his country. But local atmosphere is only one part of this heart-warming drama and its happy outcome. There is a universality in its message which goes well beyond a particular locale. Reflection and nostalgia, joy and anxiety, alienation and a sense of community are as much part of the topography of Marie Červinková-Riegrová's libretto as the Bohemian landscape itself; all it took was Dvořák to unlock the song.

Jan Smaczny

Mirco Palazzi (Filip), Michal Lehotsky (Jiří)



Wexford Festival Opera Chorus 2001

CHORUS MASTER
Lubomir Mátl

LADIES

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Hana Petzeltová
Vlasta Prudičová
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Ivana Vlášáková
Věra Žemberi
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Kevin Ferguson
John Fletcher
Petr Frýbert
Jiří Hannsmann
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David Menezes
Michael Mergl
Aleš Mihálik
Lubomír Moravec
Jaroslav Patočka
Angel Pazos
Jiří Prudič
Jaroslav Šefrna

Alasdair Elliott (Benda), Mariana Panova (Terinka) and Chorus



The National Philharmonic Orchestra of Belarus

DIRECTOR

Josif Turko

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Aliaksei Maskalenka
Ala Dzianisava
Maryna Liaudanskaya
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Alena Sturnitskaya
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Liudmila Krasouskaya

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Volha Kryvakhizha
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Yauheni Melnichuk

Flute

Valiantsin Tsikheвич

Piccolos

Dzmitry Talmachou
Valeri Grigoriev

Oboes/ English horn

Aleh Alesiuk
Sviatlana Cyargeenka
Vladimir Maximenka

Clarinets

Piotr Navumenko
Rudolf Ihnatsyeyu
Bass Clarinet
Vladimir Derychev

Bassoon

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Contrabassoon
Mark Shtserneuski

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Mechyslau Chubin
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Anatoli Rusak
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Mark Ratner
Aleksandre Roudnitski

Harp

Ala Shukhman

Piano

Yuri Hildziuk



Antonín Dvořák
Jakobín

024 2SACD

Ideato e prodotto da - *Conceived and produced by*
Giulio Cesare Ricci

Registrato da - *Recorded by*
Hein Dekker (Philips International B.V.), Carl Schuurbiers (Polyhymnia)

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canali sinistro/destro posteriori, *left/right back channels*: Schoeps MK21
preamplificatori microfonic, *micro pre-amplifiers*: Polyhymnia Custom Built
cavi di linea, digitali, microfonic e di alimentazione: van den Hul
line, digital, microphone, and supply cables: van den Hul
registrato in 5 canali e stereo Direct Stream Digital (DSD™)
su registratore Pyramix usando convertitori dCS A/D e D/A
recorded in 5-channel and stereo Direct Stream Digital (DSD™)
on the Pyramix Recorder using dCS A/D and D/A converters

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Alexander Voloschuk (conductor)

